



Core content is revised for 2007 testing

By Faun S. Fishback

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Teachers throughout Kentucky are waiting for "the green flag" from the Kentucky Department of Education so they can begin using the Core Content for Assessment 4.0 in their curriculum planning. Kentucky's core content document identifies the content for all students to know in preparation for the annual state assessments that are part of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

Items from the revised core content will appear as field test items on the Kentucky Core Content tests administered this spring. However, schools will not be held accountable for teaching the revised content until spring 2007 testing.

The signal for teachers to begin using the revised document will come only after the state testing contract is finalized and a final review is conducted on all content areas. Until then, Commissioner Gene Wilhoit has been advising educators in schools and districts to use draft documents posted on the department's Web site (www.education.ky.gov) to identify the differences between versions 3.0 and 4.0.

Teachers and department staff have developed CrossWalk documents, also posted on the Web site, to show the connection between the two versions. These CrossWalks will help teachers better understand the changes the latest core content revision will have on their instruction.

What's the difference?

The revised core content document is organized by "big ideas" that help identify what can be assessed on CATS testing without narrowing the curriculum. It's also organized by grade levels: end of primary, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades, and high school. This will allow teachers in each grade — not just assessment years — to know what content students need to learn and know.

The new core content also is organized by the appearance of the printed words and use of punctuation:

• **Bold type** indicates content that may appear on the state assessment

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Photo by Rick McComb

Engrossed in the story

Despite all the activity in the hallway mural behind her, Kayan Shotwell, a student at Anne Mason Elementary in Scott County, finds this bench a quiet place to relax and continue reading on her book.

Muhlenberg County educator designs program to motivate all students

By Faun S. Fishback

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The reality television show "Survivor" grabbed the country's attention several years ago as cameras captured the struggles of everyday people trying to survive in tropical locales. The program continues to amaze viewers by showing what physical and mental hardships men and women will endure to win \$1 million.

That show caught the imagination of Michele Bowling, a curriculum specialist and primary consultant in Muhlenberg County Schools. And, the program she developed, "Survivor CATS," has been successful in three district elementary schools by motivating students to learn

and building a sense of community within the schools.

Bowling worked at Graham Elementary when she developed Survivor CATS three years ago. The rural school was to close at the end of that school year. Students were going to a new school, and the faculty would be reassigned.

She felt the Survivor-like program would encourage and motivate students to do their best during their last year at the school. The program incorporates Character Counts, best practices and core content into motivational activities that prepare students to be successful in the

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KTLC '06 is March 9-11

The Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference, KTLC '06, kicks off its 27th year March 9-11 at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville. The high-quality professional development event is planned to provide the latest in research-based education programs, as well as to give educators from throughout the state an event in which to network and exchange teaching strategies and instructional activities.

This year's three-day event features 21 different topic areas that range from content-specific sessions to technology to parent involvement to services for specific student populations. Teachers and administrators can select from more than 50 ticketed three-hour workshops and nearly 300 90-minute and two-hour sessions to plan their own conference agendas.

The conference begins on Thursday, March 9, with ticketed workshops. Workshops also will be conducted on Friday. A separate registration fee of \$50 is required for the three-hour workshops.

Workshops allow participants to receive hands-on training, study a topic in depth or preview new curriculum resources. Concurrent sessions will be presented Friday and Saturday.

Willard Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education, will give the keynote speech on Friday morning, March 10. He will focus on what students in the 21st century need to know and be able to do to be successful

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Bulletin Board



Photo by Rick McComb

Conferences

KAGE

The Kentucky Association for Gifted Education will hold its winter professional development workshop Feb. 23-24 at the Marriott Griffin Gate in Lexington.
www.wku.edu/kage

KTLC

The Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference is set for March 9-11 at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville. Pre-registration discounts for individuals and school teams will be honored until Feb. 21. One conference registration fee (a \$100 value)

will be waived when a school team of five or more registers.
www.kentuckytlc.org

Family literacy

The 15th annual National Conference on Family Literacy is set for March 19-21 at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. "Creating a Literate Nation" is the theme for the conference. Sessions will offer cutting-edge strategies and initiatives that promote literacy and language development for children and adults.
www.famlit.org

Events

Read Across America

Read Across America, a nationwide initiative that promotes reading every day of the year, will be celebrated on March 2. Free resource materials are available for teachers to download on the National Education Association's Web site.
www.nea.org/readacross

Photo-essay contest

Kentucky students at all grade levels may enter "Working Places/Places That Work," a photo and essay competition sponsored by the Kentucky Heritage Council and Preservation Kentucky Inc. Essays must be postmarked by March 31.
Contact: Becky Shipp, (502) 564-7005, Becky.Shipp@ky.gov
www.preservationkentucky.org/pdf/2006PhotoEssayGuidelinesEntryForm.pdf

Thoroughbred Center productions

The Thoroughbred Center in Lexington has several upcoming productions that are appropriate for school field trips. Performances are at 10 a.m. and noon.
"Junie B. Jones" is a musical based on the books by Barbara Park. Junie has finally graduated from kindergarten. Follow her adventures as she writes everything down in her "top-secret personal beeswax" journal. Suggested for grades K-5. Performances are March 23-24.
"I Never Saw Another Butterfly" is a true story, told through the artwork and poetry of the children of Terezin Concentration Camp during World War II. Suggested for grades five and up. Performances are March 30-31.
Contact: Box Office, (859) 293-1853
www.thethoroughbredcenter.com

Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

Know a great K-6 elementary mathematics or science teacher? Nominate him or her to receive presidential recognition. The 2006 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) are sponsored by the White House and administered by the National Science Foundation. State-level winners in each content area receive a \$10,000 award and a paid trip for two to Washington, D.C. Nominated teachers must submit a completed application by May 1.
Contact: Kentucky Department of Education mathematics consultant Ann Bartosh or science consultant Jackie Hensley at (502) 564-2106, or by e-mail at ann.bartosh@education.ky.gov or jackie.hensley@education.ky.gov
www.paemst.org

Arts showcase

The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts will host artists and exhibitors from across the United States at its annual Arts Education Showcase in Louisville on Friday, March 10. The showcase will be held during the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference at the Kentucky International Convention Center. The one-day event will familiarize Kentucky educators with performing artists, visual artists, arts organizations and cultural institutions that are available as resources for their schools. The showcase is scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Additional regional showcases will be held in the fall of 2006.
Contact: Jeffrey Jamner, (502) 562-0703; jjamner@kentuckycenter.org
www.kentuckycenter.org/education/artseducation.asp

Resources

Teaching resources

The Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) Web site helps teachers find resources on federal government Web sites. The site is updated each week with new materials and highlights in a variety of content areas.
www.ed.gov/free/index.html

New teachers' survival guide

The U.S. Department of Education offers a new online book, "Become a Teacher: Survival Guide for New Teachers." The publication offers insight into the successes and challenges facing new teachers and those who work with them. Download the free book at www.ed.gov/teachers/become/about/survivalguide/index.html.

Bulletin Board is compiled by Joy Barr
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Commissioner's Comments

Making high school relevant for 21st century students

By Gene Wilhoit

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As I write this month's column, I'm reminded of the old adage: "If you keep on doing what you've always done, you're going to keep getting what you always got." It's not succinct and maybe not the best grammar, but it's a good reminder that if we want different results, we must make changes.

Over the past two years, the Kentucky Board of Education has been looking closely at secondary education in this state. The board wants to ensure our high schools are producing young adults who are ready for the next step — college, technical training and work.

The board knows that successful high schools have far-reaching effects on Kentucky's future economy and its global competitiveness. It wants our high schools to graduate students who are ready to make positive contributions to the 21st century global economy.

Currently, our high schools — and high schools across America — are lagging behind their counterparts around the globe. In science and mathematics, American high school students are not competitive with students in leading industrialized nations.

Kentucky high school graduation rates have not dropped as much as the national graduation rates, but Kentucky's graduation rates need improving. Of 100 Kentucky students in the ninth grade this school year, on average:

- 65 will graduate from high school in four years
- 39 will go to college
- 26 of those 39 will enroll in college for their sophomore year
- 15 will graduate from college

What will happen to the other 85 young adults? What kind of jobs will they qualify for as dropouts or with only a high school diploma? Where will they end up in our economy?

Without changes, the outlook for those 85 students isn't very bright, according to The Business Forum on Kentucky Education report issued last summer by Kentucky business and civic leaders. The report calls for redesigning high schools to improve performance of today's students once they graduate.

The report says that preparing students to succeed in the workplace is as important as preparing them to succeed in postsecondary studies. The report has other recommendations for adding rigor and relevance to Kentucky high school coursework to better prepare all students for college and careers.

Without changes, Kentucky high school students tell me they will continue to drop out, disengage from studies and be content with the status quo. More than

1,500 students participated in sessions earlier this school year to discuss the high school experience. Those who spoke said emphatically that they want to meet challenges from teachers to succeed at higher levels. However, the students say too many teachers don't have high expectations for them.

We must have high expectations for our secondary students. Kentucky educators cannot be satisfied to offer general track studies that allow able students to drift through four years of high school and graduate unprepared for postsecondary studies and the work force.

We must challenge our young adults. We must provide rigorous coursework. We must show them the relevance in what they are studying to successful careers after high school.

And, students at the summit told me over and over, they want to know that teachers care about each of them — not just the "smart" students — and how well they do in school.

That is why the state board has made refocusing secondary education a primary initiative for the Kentucky Department of Education. That's why the board spends a generous amount of each meeting discussing issues surrounding secondary education in Kentucky.

When the board began its secondary education initiative, it approved pilot projects that allowed educators in selected high schools to explore cutting-edge practices like giving students more responsibility for their learning, moving from earning Carnegie credits, which are based

on seat time, to end-of-course assessments and performance-based credits like student projects.

This year, those Vanguard schools have expanded into the Kentucky Secondary Schools Alliance with more than 175 member high schools and their feeder schools in 75 districts across Kentucky. These schools are working with the Department of Education and Willard Daggett, a nationally known education expert, to infuse rigor, relevance and relationship into all aspects of their teaching and learning.

(Educators throughout the state can hear Daggett talk about "Preparing Students for Their Future" on March 10 at the 2006 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference in Louisville. Following the keynote, he will conduct a session that describes the goals of the Alliance and explains what must be done in Kentucky secondary schools to meet the needs of all students in the 21st century.)

As a natural progression of refocusing high schools, the state board has begun revising the state's high school graduation requirements. Several proposals are being discussed, including mathematics credit, more specific requirements for science and an increased emphasis on the Individual Learning Plan that is required for every middle and high school student.

The board will continue talking about these proposed requirements at its February meeting. Any changes in the requirements made by the board would take effect for the graduating class of 2012, or those

students entering seventh grade next fall who will be freshmen in 2008.

The board did agree in January on these points:

- Algebra II will be required if the proposed changes to the graduation requirement regulation are passed by the board
- Students will have the option of participating in an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary or technical/occupational course that meets the standards outline for Algebra I, Geometry or Algebra II in the state's "Program of Studies"
- Mathematics course offerings will be included in every year of high school so that students will be less likely to be placed in remediation at the postsecondary level or be unable to pass an employability test

The board also agreed to accept recommendations from department staff that would allow students to take English/language arts required classes (English I, II, III and IV) in any sequence and allow arts content courses in art, dance, music, theater and visual arts to fulfill the Appreciation of Visual and Performing Arts requirement. The board also accepted the recommendation to require that one of the three social studies credits be a specific course in U.S. History. However, the board decided not to change the current half credit in physical education and half credit in health.

In addition, the board has asked the department to work with the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Education Professional Standards Board to build world language capacity in Kentucky schools by 2012.

Not many changes have occurred in secondary education during the past 100 years. However, we know now that we can no longer continue doing what we've been doing if we want different results — higher academic achievement, increased graduation rates, students who need no remediation in college or technical school, graduates who can pass employability tests and secure good jobs.

Making the changes needed for high schools to prepare students for college and careers will be successful only if we work together to meet the needs of our students. We can do that only when we are open to new ideas, strategies and practices. The department's work around rigor, relevance and relationships is a good place to start to ensure that Kentucky high school graduates have the best chance as adults to perform at high levels in their chosen occupation.

(If you would like to comment on this topic, contact the commissioner at gene.wilhoit@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Rick McComb

Calculating for the future

Kelsie Smithson, a sophomore at Male High School (Jefferson County), thinks about the mathematics process she needs to use to solve a problem on the calculator during her Algebra II honors class. Students who will be freshmen in 2008 will be required to take Algebra II if the Kentucky Board of Education approves proposed changes in the high school graduation requirements at its February meeting.

Escuela de Inmersión en Español

Maxwell Elementary students excel in an environment that offers global learning experiences every day

By Joy Barr

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In any language, the news is good: Fayette County's Maxwell Elementary School is a leader in student achievement. Students at the Spanish immersion magnet school are excelling in the integrated multicultural environment that fosters their development of traditional basic skills in English, as well as the additional skill of learning to communicate in Spanish what they learn.

Maxwell Elementary's scores on state assessments point out the success of the partial immersion program on student achievement. The school's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) accountability index is 101.

The more than 500 students in the K-5 school make up a very diverse school population. However, Maxwell's school culture of mutual respect and inclusion for all students is a giant step toward keeping every student engaged in learning, according to Principal Heather Bell.

Everyone at the school believes that each student can learn at high levels. Teachers believe that every student can achieve, and they do whatever it takes to make that happen, Bell added.

One-half of the school day at Maxwell is devoted to Spanish language instruction and content instruction in Spanish. The other half of the school day, instruction is in English. Instruction of social studies is integrated through language arts/reading in both Spanish and English. Mathematics concepts also are integrated into other content areas for additional reinforcement.

Collaboration is one of the keys to student success at Maxwell. "Our teachers work together to integrate core content to maximize learning opportunities for all students," said Bell.

Teachers monitor their instruction, as well as student work, and evaluate both on a regular basis. Teachers and staff get together weekly to collaborate, Bell added.

Because of the highly structured curriculum, classroom teachers must use their time well, the principal pointed out. Teachers plan long-range, and lesson plans are intentional with

a focus on Kentucky's core content. Teachers also closely monitor student progress to achieve Maxwell Elementary's mission: "Proficiency for All."

Bell is relentless in the school's focus on instruction. By using higher-order thinking skills, students are empowered to become lifelong learners who are able to live, to think, and to appreciate diversity in a changing world.

Maxwell Elementary introduced the Spanish immersion program into its curriculum in 1990. Fabio Zuluaga, director of elementary schools for Fayette County and former principal at Maxwell, said the program was one of the most rewarding experiences he has had as an educator.

"Our students are exposed to the Spanish language and cultures through mathematics, reading, music, art and social studies. At Maxwell, as well as Bryan Station Middle and High

Schools (into which Maxwell Elementary feeds), the staff works together to provide a solid educational program that not only benefits our students, but all students involved in the program," said Zuluaga. "Immersion education enables students to adjust more easily to differences in our changing world."

Research has shown that children who begin to learn a second language before adolescence are more likely to:

- develop native-like pronunciation and thinking skills in their second language
- develop stronger language skills in their native tongue
- develop stronger mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills
- score higher on both verbal and mathematics standardized tests that are conducted in English

Functional proficiency in the Spanish language is the main

objective of the partial immersion program. Students demonstrate proficiency when they can communicate on topics appropriate to their age level, Principal Bell said.

Students also must achieve in English and language arts content areas comparable to or surpassing the achievement of students in English-only programs. Courses offered at Maxwell in Spanish are language arts, science and mathematics. All other courses are offered in English, including a language arts/English class.

There is a very strong parent and community involvement network at the school. "Partnerships with parents and community groups combined with superior instruction have provided our students with the skills to surpass the state's proficiency goals set for 2014," said Bell.

Teachers and parents are at the heart of this Spanish immer-

sion school. Parents and volunteers are involved on a daily basis. School-to-home communication also is an important method used to keep everyone informed, she added.

Maxwell is a school where teachers and families work together to provide opportunities for students that ensure both academic achievement and cultural responsiveness and provide the foundation for future success in the global community. "The school culture, climate and enthusiasm for learning (at Maxwell) needs to be seen to be believed," Bell said.

For more information about Maxwell Elementary's Spanish immersion program, contact Principal Heather Bell, (859) 381-3516, hbell@fayette.k12.ky.us. Information is also available on the school's Web site at www.maxwell.fcps.net.



Maxwell Elementary teacher Georgette Bouvy works with fourth grader Susie Saffari on a mathematics conversion problem at the Fayette County Spanish immersion magnet school.

Photo by Rick McComb

Reading First grants help Danville students improve

Reading First, a component of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, was created to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade. Two Danville Independent schools, Hogsett and Toliver elementaries, are receiving grants of nearly \$900,000 per school over a six-year funding period to improve the reading performance of primary students.

Over that six-year period, 74 schools in 45 Kentucky public school districts will receive a total of \$89 million from the Reading First grant program.

The grants are providing ways for these schools to better support reading instruction. Teachers at the two Danville schools have attended more than 100 hours of training in reading instruction. Each school has the assistance of a school-based reading coach, district and state coach, and program consultants. In addition, both schools are utilizing research-based reading materials specifically designed for teaching early readers.

Sandy Embree, district reading coach, credits the success of Danville's program to a number of factors. "The research-based

reading materials, along with the on-going coaching and support provided by the school reading coaches and the program consultants, have had a huge impact on the success that we are seeing. In addition, the on-going assessments have provided data that pinpoint the specific needs of the students," she said. "I'm so proud of our teachers! They are committed to improving the reading performance of our students. We are seeing great results!"

Laura Perry, Hogsett Reading First coach, agrees. "We are excited that we now have on-going assessments that allow us to determine students' individual needs. With research-based programs and highly trained teachers, we are effectively meeting the needs of all students."

Primary students receive 120 minutes of daily reading instruction in the core program, Open Court, and in supplemental reading programs. Struggling readers have an intensive assistance reading plan. These students receive an additional 30 minutes of reading instruction each day beyond the core/supplemental reading programs.

"With our enthusiastic, well-

trained and motivated staff, we have been able to give all of our students daily opportunities to experience the joys of reading for information and for pleasure!" says JoAnn Hamm, Toliver Reading First coach. "Toliver teachers became efficient and effective in meeting student needs and achieving a high level of success in our first year of Reading First instruction."

Embree and school reading coaches saw student improvement in the first year of the program. Based on assessment results, early primary students showed the greatest gains during the 2004-2005 school year. More than 80 percent of the P1-P2 students performed at or above grade level on reading skills.

While 32 percent of upper primary students were reading at or above grade level when school began in 2004, all students showed considerable improvement. By the end of the year, 54 percent of the P3 and P4 students were reading at or above grade level.

Embree continues to be pleased with the progress students at the two schools are making. "Reading affects so much of a student's



Photo by Melanie Smith, Danville Independent Schools

Interventionist Bill Loran uses Reading Mastery materials to help students at Hogsett Elementary build their reading skills.

success in school, and it touches every content area," she said. "When our students leave the primary program as strong readers, they are on their way to suc-

cess throughout the rest of their school career."

Contact: Sandy Embree at (859) 936-8504, sembree@danville.k12.ky.us.

Safe School Assessment helps improve learning environment

Schools throughout Kentucky and the nation are investing thousands of dollars in surveillance equipment, trained police officers and sensitive electronic devices to detect weapons, curb non-compliant student behavior and deter violence in schools. While these methods are useful, decades of research show that the safest, healthiest and most successful academic settings begin with close, caring relationships among the adults and students in the buildings.

The Kentucky Center for School Safety has begun an initiative to help school leaders assess and improve the learning environments in Kentucky schools. Superintendents and principals can request a Safe School Assessment to discover ways to build relationships and create more nurturing and healthy learning environments.

The Center has conducted the free assessments to gauge the culture and climate of more than 100 schools throughout the state. Findings from those assessments show that there are no greater barriers to learning

than those that prevent the formation of healthy relationships within a school.

As part of the assessment, a team of six educators and professionals from the Center for School Safety, Kentucky School Boards Association and Kentucky Department of Education spend a day in each school. During each visit, the team interviews the principal, instructional staff, custodians, parents and students to learn their perceptions about safety, rule compliance, rule enforcement, consistency and fairness of the principal and staff, the frequency of bullying, gang activity, vandalism, drug use, possession of weapons and other issues.

The team observes the staff's supervision patterns and interaction with students throughout the school day, as well as how students interact with one another, how they accept individual differences, if they observe school rules and how comfortable, in general, they seem at school. The physical appearance of the building and its maintenance also are included in the assessment.

The team presents its initial findings to the principal and staff at the end of the visit. About a month later, the principal and superintendent receive a comprehensive report on "commendations" and "mutual areas of concern" found during the visit. The report supplies school

Christian County community focused on reading

Christian County Public Schools have discovered a way to get the whole community focused on reading. For 14 years, the Christian County Board of Education and the Christian County Literacy Council have sponsored "Community Reader Day," a program that brings people from throughout the community into every local elementary school — public, private and pre-school classes — to read.

Community Reader Day 2005 was held last Nov. 4. By the end of school that day, 240 community volunteers had read the book, "B is for Bluegrass" by Mary Ann McCabe Hiehle, to more than 5,000 preschool and elementary school students in Christian County. The book con-

tains poems and text about Kentucky history and geography. Each child received a sticker that said, "Ask me about Community Reader Day" to promote additional family conversations about reading. Other family activities were held throughout the week of Community Reader Day in the community.

According to Beverly E. Thomson, adult education coordinator for Christian County Public Schools, adult education professionals developed the program in 1991 to help break the cycle of illiteracy in the community and to build a stronger community commitment to supporting elementary and secondary education.

"Their philosophy was that

Superintendents and principals interested in having a school participate in a Safe School Assessment can contact Steve Kimberling or Jon Akers toll free at (877) 805-4277 or visit www.kysafeschools.org/clear/assessment.html for more information.

this in turn would reduce the dropout rate, and as a consequence, reduce the number of adults who need to pursue a GED or basic skills remediation to become self-sufficient," Thomson said.

Having the entire community reading the same book on the same day in local schools has helped increase literacy awareness and generated positive discussions about the importance of reading and success in school, she added. Many of the volunteer readers have continued to volunteer in the classes they visited on Community Reader Day.

For more information about this program, contact Beverly E. Thomson, (270) 887-1319, bthomson@christian.k12.ky.us.

Scott County students learn they can make a difference in their community through 'Project Citizen' activities

By Cathy Lindsey

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What can a group of fifth graders do to have an impact on society? At Anne Mason Elementary, you name it. These Scott County students are learning how to make their voices heard about local issues and are working to help solve problems in their school and community.

Over the past five years, different groups of students have tackled local civic issues such as saving land in their community and educating other students about the dangers of childhood obesity. A national civics program called Project Citizen guides their exploration of public policy.

Project Citizen was developed by the Center for Civic Education and is aligned to Kentucky's social studies core content. It is endorsed by Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson. This program for fifth through eighth-graders promotes responsible participation in government. Its goal is to actively engage students in monitoring and influencing public policy.

"Project Citizen provides students with the opportunity to engage directly with their community and government," Grayson said. "This type of experiential learning is vital to the development of students as active citizens of our communities, state and nation."

Grayson has long been focused on increasing civic literacy in the Kentucky. He believes building a solid foundation of knowledge with the state's youth is key.

Anne Mason Elementary fifth-grade teacher Leslie Robertson agrees. "Students at this age can become more active in their community. This program plants a seed for them for future endeavors. They get a little taste of what it's like to be taken seriously for their ideas and work and this can be very motivational."

Each project begins with students brainstorming to identify public policy problems in their community. Students must consider things like the people the

problem affects, the accessibility of information about the problem and the ability to address the problem within the four-month time period of the class project.

Once students have selected a problem, they must gather information. The local library, the Internet, community members, civic organizations and legislative or local government offices are a few examples of resources.

"Students have a great deal of choice in how they gather information," Robertson said. "Some choose video, personal interviews, inviting speakers, reading from various sources and multimedia presentations."

The next step is for the class to develop

are proposing and explain how they support and can help implement the changes, Robertson explained.

After the presentation, students, in a cooperative class effort, then reflect on their learning experience. They discuss what and how they learned, and what they might do differently if they were to develop another portfolio.

"My students (who have completed this project) have a much better understanding of government and what it means to be a responsible citizen," said Robertson. "They learned first-hand how to work within a system to make changes when they feel they are necessary."

Last year, Robertson's class wanted to

the principal and the physical education teacher. They also conducted a student survey and analyzed the results. In an effort to gain support, the class then met with the school staff.

Last year's class took its obesity education project to the state Project Citizen competition. The project won first runner-up honors as well as the best portfolio award. Two years ago, Robertson's class was the state Project Citizen winner with a project on Amber Alerts that provide local notification about child abductions. That project was showcased at the national level where it received an outstanding ranking.

Robertson believes Project Citizen's most important lesson for her students is that anyone can make a difference if that person gets involved.

"Age doesn't matter. Who you are doesn't matter. How much education or money you have doesn't matter," Robertson said. "Everyone has the responsibility to be active citizens."

Through their participation in Project Citizen, Robertson's students come away with much more than merely studying about citizenship.

"Students develop a real respect for the process and their rights and responsibilities as citizens," she said.

For more information about Project Citizen, contact Billy Stover, Administrative Office of the Court's Division of Law Related Education, at (502) 573-2350 or billys@kycourts.net.



Anne Mason Elementary fifth-grade teacher Leslie Robertson leads a brainstorming session with students to identify possible issues for their Project Citizen project this school year.

a portfolio. Students work in groups to put together different parts of the portfolio. It should include an explanation of the problem with documentation of research, an examination of alternative policies to deal with the problem, a public policy proposal to deal with the problem and an action plan for how to implement the policy.

"Group dynamics can be very powerful for struggling students," Robertson said. "Students can work in areas they feel are strengths while still having the opportunity to learn from others in the group. This helps build trust and confidence."

The class then must present its portfolio to an audience. Students must explain the importance of the problem and evaluate alternative policies so that the audience can determine the advantages and disadvantages of each. Students should make a convincing case for the policy they

implement an obesity education program within the school. The students' proposal was that the class would meet once a week with either a teacher or the school nurse to set fitness and nutritional goals. They would plan and make a healthy snack. The class would allow students to discuss issues about their weight or incidents that had bothered them. The obesity education class would be available to first through fifth graders and would meet for one hour one day each week.

"The students were empowered to make changes and took ownership of their own learning," Robertson said. "They made the decisions. They took the action."

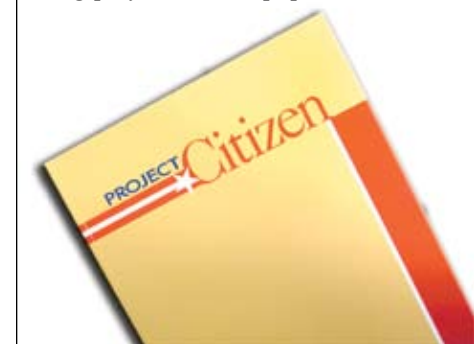
Students invited a speaker from the state health department who provided them with statistics about obesity in Kentucky's children. They wrote to get a free copy of a workbook. They interviewed

Can my class be part of 'Project Citizen'?

Each year the Center for Civic Education provides a limited number of free sets of materials to teachers wishing to participate in Project Citizen. Priority is given to:

- Middle grade teachers willing to teach the Project Citizen curriculum to their students
- Middle grade teachers who agree to hold a Project Citizen portfolio and hearing showcase in their class/school

If you are interested in using these materials, go to www.civiced.org/project_citizen.php?link=free.



Teaching is more of a calling than a profession for Jeffrey Wright, Kentucky's Teacher of the Year

By Joy Barr

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Imagine a high school physics class that is so popular about 150 juniors and seniors are on a waiting list to take the class. The reason? Jeffrey Wright teaches the class.

Wright, a science teacher at Jefferson County's Louisville Male Traditional High School, is Kentucky's 2006 Teacher of the Year. And, yes, so many students want to take his physics class that there is a waiting list.

Wright is one of 24 teachers from across the state honored with 2006 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards.

He received \$10,000 and a commemorative glass bowl. In addition, the Kentucky Department of Education will provide a sabbatical or suitable alternative to Wright, who will represent the state in the

2006 National Teacher of the Year competition.

"It's very humbling, and overwhelming at the same time," said Wright. He has 15 years' experience teaching physics and biology. He has taught at Male for seven years and previously was a teacher at Trinity, a private high school in Louisville.

Wright earned his bachelor's degree at Bellarmine University and a master's degree at the University of Louisville. He is certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. He chairs the Physics Alliance and serves as a Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) resource teacher and a National Board Certification mentor teacher.

His professional affiliations include the National Science Teachers and National Education Associations; Kentucky Association of Physics Teachers; Louisville Area Chemistry and Physics Alliances; LAT-TICE Technology Alliance and the Louisville Area Amateur Astronomers. He also is a representative to Male's school based decision making council.

He has earned numerous honors, recently receiving the

2005 Disney Hand National Teacher Award, which honors creativity in teaching. More than 50,000 nominations nationwide were made for the annual award.

"Students keep you humble. They don't really care what awards you get," he said.

Wright, who says teaching "is more a calling than a profession," focuses on getting students involved in classes. "I believe that the teacher with the most 'toys' wins, and science teachers definitely have the most toys. Not to mention, I like to blow things up. Seriously, science mirrors my love of learning because

Students describe his classes as difficult, but awesome. Wright will go so far as to lie on a bed of nails ... to make a physics lesson exciting, they say.

it is always expanding. I find so many new things that fascinate me and that I can use to apply the content to my students," he said.

Describing his teaching style as hands-on is an understatement. For example, in one lesson, his students built a hovercraft that was used to float two football players down the school hallway.

"I want students to love learning and become lifetime learners. I apply high standards, fun, praise and love in my teaching," said Wright. "As students develop self-discipline in their contemplation and awareness of their beliefs, they are empowered to be critical thinkers, problem solvers and lifelong learners."

"It's getting them interested in learning. If you do that, I think they pretty well do the teaching by themselves," he added.

Students say he is a fun teacher who always has time for them, and will go so far as to lie on a bed of nails and allow a concrete block to be broken over his chest to make a lesson exciting. They describe his classes as difficult, but awesome. One student said, "He makes everything so much fun. You do things in his class you don't do anywhere else."

Bonnie Wantland, chair of Male's science department, said one of the reasons she nominated Wright for Teacher of the Year is because "he makes certain that

when his students need him, he is available. He is always there for them.

"Jeff is a dedicated, enthusiastic teacher who serves as an excellent role model for his students and for his fellow teachers. He truly embodies all the qualities attributed to 'the best' of the teaching profession. Although Jeff has an extremely active life with his professional, personal and community involvement, he always takes time to interact with his students. He makes science come alive," said Wantland.

Wright attempts to make his classes unique but they actually are a compilation of what he has learned from observing and working with other effective teachers — his mentors. Wright has a banner hanging in his classroom that states, "Tell me, and I will forget; show me, and I will remember; involve me, and I will understand." He applies that strategy daily in his classroom teaching.

"If I get to the point in my career where I am pulling out the same lessons year after year, then I have stopped growing and learning how to be better. By listening to my students, I can find out what sparks them, which leads to self-motivation and self-instruction; the best form of teaching possible," said Wright.

Student involvement and understanding is the core of every lesson plan he develops, he said. Each day, Wright challenges students to use physics to explain why something occurs or to demonstrate how something works.

Each class begins with "Mr. Wright's daily diversion of trivial scientific facts of knowledge!" This activity is usually just a trivial fact, question or discrep-

ant event that the students find interesting. Wright uses this as a sponge to soak students into the topic of the day's lesson. He usually tries to make the sponge a question that he knows many students often wonder about, and therefore sparks their innate interests, he says.

Known for his brilliant imagination, Wright inspires his students by presenting demonstrations that confirm an under-



Students watch Teacher of the Year Jeffrey Wright balance a spinning bicycle wheel on its axle to demonstrate the conservation of momentum theory before Monica Choe, seated, helps him demonstrate another physics theory.

standing of each lecture. He shows students how to count calories by burning potato chips. He might demonstrate a chemical reaction by exploding a two-liter bottle by adding dry ice.

Students get excited and curious. They forget they are in a classroom learning how many calories are in one potato chip and how pressure increases as volume decreases.

"I want my classroom to be one of discovery, but also of scientific investigation which includes a hypothesis, experiment, data and conclusion. I believe I often teach lab exercises backwards," said Wright.

For example, after the "diversion" activity he may lecture or

have a class discussion about the concept that he wants students to learn. In essence, the students know the answer before the lab begins, but it is the students' job to work together in groups and devise a way to prove the scientific theory and then answer the daily question. He finds the students learn more designing their own experiments, as opposed to following the steps written for them in a manual without explanations as to why.

This year Wright's classes are working with the drama and choral departments to design a lift to make an actress appear to levitate and fly as she performs as the witch in "Wicked." Students will then write a proposal that may become part of their writing portfolio.

"Cross-curricular applications add another dimension of interest and authenticity to the lesson and provide a real life way of teaching the core content of simple machines," said Wright. "Most of my best lessons come from ideas I

get from listening to what interests the students and the activities in which they are involved."

Principal Dave Wilson believes that Wright is one of Kentucky's best educators. "Great teachers can just flat teach. It doesn't matter who the students are, what the subject is or what the constraints are," said Wilson. "The best thing that I can do for him as an administrator is to give him the resources he needs and remove any barriers that may keep him from connecting with the students."

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Russell Independent's student orchestra helps foster high achievement for members in grades 3-12

By Cathy Lindsey

cathy.lindsey@education.ky.gov

"Music has a power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young."—Aristotle

When the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote these words in 348 BC, could he have imagined that music educators thousands of years later would still be answering the question: Is music education valuable to a child's overall education? Centuries later, music educators still affirm the value of music with an overwhelming, "Yes!"

Kentucky teacher Jason Chapman is no exception. As the director of the Russell Independent Schools' student orchestra, he sees the daily value of the program as it fosters creativity, passion, discipline and high student achievement among students at all levels.

"I see it as a moral imperative," Chapman said. "This is a passion and talent that some students have. Schools don't have a right to deny someone resources to cultivating a talent."

Now in its fifth year, this student orchestra has grown to include 300 students in grades 3-12. The district has the distinction of having the only third-grade public school orchestra in the state. From its inception, the orchestra program has based its work on serving the various needs of the students, whether these needs were academic, social, physical or musical.

"The orchestra has become a community within the school," Chapman said, "and a haven for many students."

If a student has academic problems, then members of the orchestra help by tutoring the struggling student. Students also act as personal supports throughout the many trials that young people face growing up today. Orchestra leaders intervene on behalf of students who experiment with drugs, alcohol, sex or other risky behaviors, Chapman explained.

This kind of focused attention has resulted in a dramatic increase in academic performance for students involved in the orchestra. Chapman is proud of the

fact that the grade point averages of most of the orchestra students are among the highest in the school system, in spite of the fact that they routinely recruit from at-risk and troubled children, he said. Also, nearly all of the distinguished portfolios in the district belong to orchestra students.

The district has seen a steady increase on its Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) academic index since 1999. Arts and humanities scores on CATS have risen significantly at every school in the district, as well. The middle

encourages discipline and creates motivation."

Research findings support the fact that skills learned through the discipline of music transfer to study skills, communication skills and cognitive skills useful in every part of the curriculum.

"The future of this country, and this world for that matter, depends on the imagination and creativity of its people," said Kentucky Department of Education Arts and Humanities Consultant Philip Shepherd. "Without high levels of imaginative and creative thinking, economic

and cultural stagnation will occur. Walk into a music performance classroom in any school, observe for just a minute, and you will see first-hand the ignition of these critical skills."

In the U.S. Department of Education's publication, "Getting Ready for College Early: A Handbook for Parents and Students in the Middle and Junior High School Years," it states, "Many colleges view participation in the arts and music as a valuable experience that broadens students' understanding and appreciation of the world around them."

Without the initial exposure to the orchestra, students in the Russell school district might never even have dreamed of the possibilities and opportunities they have had, Chapman said. Through community support

— including an endowment for the program — and student fundraisers, the orchestra has traveled extensively and worked with world-class musicians.

The orchestra has attended performances of the Huntington (W. Va.) Symphony Orchestra and the Louisville Symphony. Students have visited Cincinnati's Baroque Violin Shop where they saw violins in various stages of construction.

In New York City, students received master classes from Jerry Stiken, director of the New York City Opera, and Brian

Agar, a cellist most famous for his work with bands such as Led Zeppelin, Pearl Jam and The Who.

In Chicago, they received master classes from Brian Commanday, who taught at Harvard and was the conductor of the Boston Youth Symphony.

The Russell Independent orchestra also is building student leaders, according to Chapman. Students are the recruiters for the music program. Older students give music lessons to younger students. Some members have formed groups independent of the district orchestra to perform at weddings, church functions, memorials and other social events to raise money for the district program.

The next step, Chapman believes, is to find a better way to assess student understanding of the arts. Performing arts must be performed, he explained. Basketball players don't become better by reading and writing about how to play. They become better by actually dribbling, passing and shooting the ball on the court. The same is true with performing arts, he said.

"Assessments on paper don't reward true artistic knowledge," Chapman said. "Understanding comes through performance, but how do you test that?"

The Kentucky Board of Education recognizes this dilemma of assessing arts and humanities content and has asked Department of Education staff to initiate pilot studies to identify and develop assessment approaches in Arts and Humanities that will address what students do as well as what they know in these areas. According to Shepherd, Department of Education staff is working to bring this assignment to fruition.

In the meantime, Chapman says he will cherish his role in his students' lives. Spending time with the same students over the span of third grade through twelfth grade allows him opportunities to build strong relationships with his students.

This bond with students can help guide them in the right direction at critical points in their lives, he said.

He also will continue to nurture his student's talents and increase their cultural awareness, he said.

"I truly want my students to be intelligent in the classical sense of the word,"

Chapman said, "as well as thoughtful, insightful, independent, creative, and above all else, passionate."

Contact: Jason Chapman, jchapman@russell-ind.k12.ky.us or Philip Shepherd, Kentucky Department of Education arts and humanities consultant at (502) 564-2106 or philip.shepherd@education.ky.gov.



Photos by Rick McComb

Russell Middle School student Becky Legneza practices on her cello for an upcoming performance of the Russell Independent Schools' student orchestra.



CORE from Page 1

• *Italicized type* indicates supporting content that students need to understand but that will only be assessed at the classroom level

• Plain type in mathematics content indicates supporting benchmarks for the American Diploma Project

• Parentheses, (), indicate lists of information that may or may not be assessed. If parentheses contain a list with an e.g., preceding it, the examples are just examples. If the parentheses contain a list without e.g., the list is exhaustive and is fair game for assessment.

In addition, the revised core content clarifies how students will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge on the state assessment. After each content statement, educators will find depth of knowledge (DOK) level, from 1 to 4, assigned to the statement. This “code” denotes the DOK ceiling at which assessment items will be developed for the statement for state assessment purposes.

The DOK are descriptive — not a taxonomy — to illustrate how deeply a student has to know the content in order to respond to an item on the state assessment. DOK levels do not indicate level of difficulty and do not affect the weight of an item on CATS.

The DOK levels can best be explained with these examples:

• Level 1 — The focus is on recalling and reproducing specific facts, definitions and details or on using routine procedures to explain.

• Level 2 — The focus is on the basic application of skills and concepts. This level requires deeper knowledge than definition to explain how or why.

• Level 3 — The focus is on strategic reasoning and planning in order to respond. This level requires complex and abstract thinking to draw conclusions and support reasoning.

• Level 4 — The focus is on extended reasoning and thinking. This level requires complex reasoning, planning and thinking generally over periods of time for investigation or to complete the multiple steps of the assessment item. Because of the complexity of Level 4, it will most often be assessed at the classroom level and not on state assessments. The best assessment example of Level 4 DOK is Kentucky’s writing portfolio where students complete their work over time.

Teachers should be aware that DOK for core content statements does not correspond to several other CATS components. DOK levels are not related to the points on a rubric scoring guide. DOK levels do not align with the four writing portfolio categories (novice, apprentice, proficient, distinguished). DOK levels do not necessarily correspond with the quadrants of the Rigor and Relevance Framework tool being used in many Kentucky middle and high schools.

The Department of Education has posted selected released items from previous Kentucky Core Content Tests on the Web that have been annotated to indicate what level of DOK the items address. There are released items for every content area and every assessed grade.

Why revise now?

Kentucky’s Core Content for Assessment was last updated in the late 1990s. Since that time, new research and national standards have emerged in most content areas.

The Core Content for Assessment 4.0 aligns Kentucky’s standards with that research and national standards. Revising the core content now helps clarify certain parts of the document that Kentucky teachers and administrators have said need to be clearer. The revision also provides teachers with more resources for their instruction.

Additionally, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires state assessments to “measure the depth and breadth of the state academic content standards for a given grade level.” The revision allows Kentucky to comply with that requirement.

However, the real impetus to revise the document has been the work that surrounded the process to request bids last fall for Kentucky’s next testing contractor. Kentucky’s Core Content for Assessment historically has provided potential test developers with the parameters for designing the state assessment items. Kentucky’s new testing contractor will develop items for the spring 2007 CATS tests using the Core Content for Assessment 4.0.

To view the draft Core Content for Assessment 4.0 on the Department of Education Web site, go to www.education.ky.gov and enter “draftcc” in the keyword/search box in the upper right-hand corner.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) in a science assessment

Assessment Limit	DOK Level	Potential DOK Levels or Assessment
Perform a simple science process or a set procedure to gather data	1	1 (Measure temperature of water)
Represent data collected over a period of time, making comparisons and interpretations	2	1 (Measure temperature of water at different times/places) 2 (Construct a graph to organize, display and compare data)
Interpret data collected for a research question for a scientific problem related to your environment	3	1 (Measure temperature of water at different times/places) 2 (Construct a graph to organize, display and compare data) 3 (Design an investigation to explain the effect of varying temperatures of the river at different locations)

Student identifiers are centerpiece of new statewide education database

The Kentucky Department of Education, working with all 176 public school districts, has created the central database called STISate to provide a valuable tool for gathering student information. STISate captures information on students in Kentucky public schools such as grades, demographic information, attendance, discipline, special education and health records as reported by local districts. There is a two-way transfer of STI data between the districts and the Department of Education.

Each public school student is assigned a unique state student identification known as the SSID. The SSID is central to the effective use of the collected data.

The SSID allows specific information to follow students throughout their public school careers, for example:

• Once an SSID is assigned to a student, that student’s records can be electronically transferred through STISate from one district or school to another whenever the student’s family moves.

• The ability to electronically transfer student records will allow the receiving school to have information about the type of services the student was receiving. Immediate access to this information will help receiving schools continue services for students receiving special services or participating in special programs.

Because each student has a unique SSID, duplicate counting — and possibly funding — of students will be eliminated when students move to a different school district but fail to notify the previous school district that they are leaving. The

SSID also allows for collection and reporting of disaggregated data required by federal programs such as the No Child Left Behind Act and Reading First program.

STISate also can provide more current data to inform state government leaders, legislators and other state-level policy making bodies in decision making.

The Department of Education already is planning more uses for the STISate system. In the future, students receiving early childhood services will be assigned an SSID prior to entering local public schools. Records of the services they receive during the in-home program would then follow students into school-provided programs.

In addition, teachers will soon be able to use the unique SSID to assist students in establishing online Individual Learning Plans, portfolios, transcripts and other collections of work. Schools will be able to provide this information to institutions of higher education to verify that students have met admission requirements or to employers to help determine if students have mastered prerequisite skills.

Also in the future, the department will maintain longitudinal instructional and assessment data on progress throughout a student’s public school career. Teachers will be able to use the SSID to access data to find the instructional strengths and weaknesses of their students for the upcoming year and to assist with instructional grouping and planning.

For more information about STISate, contact Tina Logan at (502) 564-5279, Tina.Logan@education.ky.gov.

Talk to Us!

Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail: kyteacher@education.ky.gov **Fax:** (502) 564-6470

Phone: (502) 564-3421 or
(800) 533-5372
(toll free in Kentucky)

Write: Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601



MUHLENBERG from Page 1

classroom and on state assessments.

She decided that all grades taking the CTBS or Kentucky Core Content Tests would be the “stranded” tribes. They would choose a color and select “buffs,” or bandanas, to wear to indicate their tribe.

The lower primary students became support tribes. Each primary class was matched to a testing-level classroom. Their tribes had the same identifiers as the testing-level tribes: the same colors, buffs and flags.

In addition, the program involved every adult in the building. Each classified staff member and every teacher who did not have a homeroom became a “chief” for a tribe.

As part of the program, tribes could win points toward the competition at the closing ceremony in the spring by having good attendance, doing well in class, encouraging other students and finding innovative ways to motivate student learning. The tribe that accumulated the most points during the school year got the honor of having its torch extinguished last.

“Survivor CATS helped with school culture and attitude more than anything,” Bowling said.

She took Survivor CATS to her next assignment at Hughes Kirk Elementary, another rural school slated for closure and consolidation with another school. “The most important thing was that the parents, students and community all came together and worked toward learning,” Bowling said. “They were all excited about it!”

Teachers embraced the opportunity to tie learning to Survivor CATS. Tara Moore developed a graphic organizer for science called “RIDDLE.” Physical education teacher Leigh Sherrod held physical challenges modeled after the TV show in

her classes.

Primary and elementary classes did lessons together such as buddy reading. Students created computer presentations about their tribes. Music teacher Jarren Calvert created Jeopardy-like review questions for students at all levels.

Students also received motivational messages from area TV personalities, national talk show host Oprah Winfrey and UK basketball player and Muhlenberg County native Patrick Sparks.

This school year, Bowling has students, faculty and staff at Central City Elementary involved in Survivor CATS. She kicked off the program during Family Reading Night in November. Students and their parents listened to Jeremy and Jeanette Biggs, members of the Indiana Woodland Alliance in Southern Indiana, talk about their Cherokee heritage and how tribes must work together as a community to survive.

They brought Native American artifacts for the students to see. They also demonstrated several of the ways their ancestors worked together each day to do chores and make decisions for the tribe.

“They reinforced to the children, parents, community and staff that it takes all of us to be successful,” Bowling said.

Central City classes already have their tribal names, colors and decorated flags that will be used in ceremonies throughout the remainder of the year. Teachers and support staff wear bracelets that remind them “Together, we can make a difference.”

Bowling will soon get community residents involved in the program. She will invite local officials to visit the school or become e-mail buddies with a tribe to show students that people in their community care about their success in school.



Photo submitted by Muhlenberg County Schools

Michele Bowling and students at Central City Elementary look over Native American artifacts that members of the Indiana Woodland Alliance, Jeremy and Jeanette Biggs and their son, brought to Family Reading Night earlier this school year.

Each teacher decides the activities for his or her class. They collaborate with the support tribe teacher to create opportunities for peer reading and spelling practice.

“This program helps our primary students bond with our intermediates. It encourages our primary teachers to help our intermediate students work on portfolios. It is a motivator for high test scores and it builds a positive school culture,” Bowling said.

A new dimension to the program this year is the adoption of a sister school in Mississippi that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. “Adopting the school has helped reinforce our message that we all

have to help one another,” Bowling said.

Central City students held a book drive and collected 2,000 books for the Mississippi school’s library. The school continues to collect more resource materials and supplies or send messages of encouragement each month to its sister school.

After having success in three different elementary schools, Survivor CATS appears to have staying power. Students love the activities, the support staff feel more a part of the school and Muhlenberg County teachers see the benefits of creating a nurturing environment for learning.

Contact: Michele Bowling, (270) 754-4474, wbowling@mberg.k12.ky.us

KTLC from Page 1

in school and as adults.

Other featured presenters include Deneen Frazier Bowen, founder and director of ActWith; Michael Hall, deputy superintendent of Information Technology with the Georgia Department of Education; Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust; Edie Holcomb, executive director of Instructional Services, Kenosha (Wis.) Unified School District No. 1; Tery Medina, associate director of the Southeastern Equity Center in Florida; Debbie Silver, author and veteran educator; and Barbara Treacy and Leinda Peterman of the Education Development Center’s EdTech Leaders Online program.

Additional activities

The Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) is offering online professional development courses that will begin with three-hour orientation and work sessions during the conference. The courses will continue online until April 23.

The fee for each online course is \$50, in

addition to conference registration. A list of KVHS online courses is available at www.kvhs.org.

Educators registered for KTLC ’06 have the opportunity to participate in the Louisville Arts Education Showcase on March 10. The showcase is one of several regional events sponsored by The Kentucky Center to help teachers and administrators become more aware of artists and arts programs available to schools.

In addition, many statewide organizations will hold meetings during the conference so that members can participate in KTLC events as well. One such group, the Kentucky National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), will hold its inaugural meeting on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the conference site to unveil a plan that will help the program continue to grow and improve, according to Jennie Richardson, Kentucky NASP program coordinator.

A joint effort of the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife

Resources, the archery program currently operates in 443 schools, providing archery training during the regular school day to students in grades 4-12.

Registration fees

KTLC ’06 participants will qualify for the early registration fee of \$100 when registration is postmarked by Feb. 21. After that date, the fee increases to \$125 per person.

Early registration for only one day of the conference (either Friday or Saturday) is \$60. The student rate is \$40. On-site fees are slightly higher for one-day and student registrations.

Conference registration does not include admission to any of the ticketed workshops on March 9 or 10. Registration for workshops is \$50 each.

Registration for online professional development also is in addition to conference registration. The cost of each course is \$50.

Chocolate and prizes

On Thursday evening, March 9, con-

ference participants can throw thoughts of calories “out the window” and attend the Grand Opening Chocolate Reception in the Exhibit Hall. While sampling decadent chocolate desserts and gourmet delicacies, participants can explore more than 300 education-related exhibits.

The Exhibit Hall also will be open all day Friday. Educators can preview and purchase the latest in educational tools, software and classroom products.

In addition, conference participants will have the opportunity to win prizes, including a plasma TV, Dell laptop computer and a cruise. Winners must be present at the drawings to receive the prizes. (Conference staff and exhibitors and their families, as well as students under 18 years of age, are not eligible for the prizes.)

For more information about the conference, contact Thelma Whiteside at (502) 564-3421, ktlc@education.ky.gov, or visit the conference Web site at www.kentuckytlc.org.

Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr
joy.barr@education.ky.gov

166 teachers receive National Board certification in 2005

The number of Kentucky teachers who have achieved certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards increased by 166 in 2005. Kentucky placed 12th among all states in the number of teachers who received national certification last year.

The newly certified teachers were honored Jan. 18 by state officials in the Capitol Rotunda and recognized by members of the House of Representatives and Senate in each legislative chamber in Frankfort.

Kentucky now has a total of 899 National Board Certified Teachers working in schools across the state. The state's goal is to have at least one National Board Certified Teacher in every public school by 2020.

Legislation passed by the 2000 General Assembly authorized teachers who achieve national certification to receive a \$2,000 annual salary supplement and 75 percent reimbursement of their application fees. They also may be awarded Rank I certification by the Education Professional Standards Board. Some local districts may offer additional salary supplements or provide stipends to reimburse certification expenses.

Teachers generally spend a minimum of 300 hours completing the certification process while continuing to teach full-time. They are evaluated on content knowledge, effectiveness in teaching, and ability to manage and measure student learning.

Visit www.nbpts.org for more information about certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. The Web site also offers a directory of all new and prior-year national certified teachers.

Tuition aid available to school counselors

The Kentucky Counseling Association (KCA) and participating colleges offer financial help to educators interested in taking summer courses toward certification as school or mental health counselors. These colleges and universities will provide one tuition waiver per teacher: Campbellsville University, Eastern Kentucky University, Lindsey Wilson College, University of Louisville, Morehead State University, Murray State University, Northern Kentucky University, Western Kentucky University and Xavier University (Ohio).

KCA will provide up to \$100 per participant for books. Students beginning work on a master's degree will get preference for aid.

Each applicant must submit a completed application, documentation of acceptance by the participating university and a letter of recommendation. The

submission deadline is April 15.

For more information and an application, visit www.kyca.org and click on "KCA Summer Scholarships."

Contact: Bill Braden, KCA executive director, at 622 Timothy Dr., Frankfort, KY 40601, bradenkca@fewpb.net or phone (502) 223-5905.

KASA conference

Disney American Teacher of the Year and author Ron Clark will address the Kentucky Association of School Administrators at its 37th annual conference, July 19-21 at the Galt House in Louisville. "Courageous Leadership Advances School Success" is this year's theme.

www.kasa.org

SISI Toolkit now online

The new Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SISI) Toolkit has been posted on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site to provide resources and tools intentionally linked to the SISI documents and focusing on high expectations for teaching and learning. The toolkit provides easy access to documents, books, videos and Web sites at www.education.ky.gov. Enter "Toolkit" in the keyword/search box in the upper right-hand corner and click.

Public education report card looks at past decade

"Quality Counts at 10: A Decade of Standards-Based Education," is the title of Education Week's tenth annual report card on public education in the United States. The report examines the progress that states have made on a core set

of policy indicators related to standards-based reform. The national publication's study found that Kentucky scores at or above average in three of the four graded policy categories.

Kentucky received a B+ in standards and accountability with tests aligned to state standards in the four core subjects at every grade span: elementary, middle and high school.

In teacher quality, Kentucky also received a B. The report noted Kentucky's strong policies related to professional support and training for teachers.

Kentucky is one of only 15 states to require and finance mentoring for all novice teachers. But according to the study, the state has room to improve in the area of teacher education and qualifications.

Kentucky did not fare as well in school climate, receiving a C. The report said Kentucky lags behind other states on measures of choice and autonomy. It joins only six other states that do not have public school open enrollment programs. The state also received a C in resource equity, indicating a relatively low degree of disparity in funding levels among its school districts.

To view the complete report, visit www.edweek.org/qc06.

High Performance Schools workshop set

Kentucky's High Performance Sustainable Schools will hold its 4th annual workshop March 23-24 at the Cincinnati Airport Marriott in Hebron, Ky. School superintendents, board members, facili-

ties managers, architects and engineers are invited to learn how high performance in new construction, renovation and operations can enhance the learning environment. The event will include tours of Twenhofel Middle School and Caywood Elementary. The two Kenton County schools are the first schools in the state to implement sustainable design using the High Performance School strategies identified in the U.S. Department of Energy's High Performance Design Guidelines.

Mark Ryles, director of the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Facilities Management, says sustainable design represents the future for Kentucky schools. "These buildings provide daylighting for classrooms for better staff and student performance and lower energy costs, geothermal heating and air conditioning systems, and environmentally sustainable design elements. Buildings can be designed to be a teaching tool with technology that makes staff and students aware of the impact of the facility on the natural environment."

To register for the workshop, go to www.energy.ky.gov.

PD for principals and media specialists

The Center for Cultural and Professional Development (formerly the Badgett Center) is offering one-day professional development sessions on two different topics.

Teacher Dispositions and the 20-Minute Hiring Assessment — Mark Wasicsko, chair of educational leadership at Northern Kentucky University, will

share his research of teacher dispositions and show participants how to craft a 20-minute interview to provide insight into an applicant's dispositions. The session is 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 28 at the McCracken County Board of Education Office in Paducah. Registration is \$175, including lunch; five hours EILA credit.

What's New in Children's Literature? — Peggy Sharp will introduce participants to the best children's books published in the past year and share strategies for using this literature in all areas of the elementary school curriculum. The session is 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 1 at the Butler Auditorium of the Caldwell County Board of Education in Princeton. Registration is \$170.

For information about either professional development session or to register, call the Center at (270) 821-4909.

www.thecpdcenter.org



Photo by Rick McComb

Building bridges between schools and business

Brenda Jackson, right, president of the Kentucky School Boards Association and a member of the Shelby County School Board, and other education and business leaders from throughout the state listen intently to Kati Haycock, director of The Education Trust, a Washington-based education group, during the Business and Education Summit sponsored earlier this year by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and the Business Forum on Kentucky Education. The one-day summit focused on involving the state's employers in initiatives designed to improve public schools.

Students relive history on 19th century Kentucky farm

By Faun S. Fishback

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Eighth graders at Shelby County's West Middle School didn't need a time machine to be part of colonial life in 19th century Kentucky. They took a 15-minute bus ride to Stockdale, a working farm with historic ties to Isaac Shelby, Kentucky's first governor.

The nearly 300 students didn't read textbooks about the time period. They spoke to re-enactors who portrayed people who lived, worked or may have visited the plantation. They walked the farmland and toured buildings on the property.

They talked with Gov. Shelby about farming and economics in 1830. They met his youngest daughter Letitia Todd, and her husband, Col. Charles Stewart Todd, the former owners of the historic plantation, and their two sons to learn about family life.

Ephraim McDowell told them about colonial medicine, 1830s health concerns and how he became the first doctor to perform abdominal surgery in this country. They found out how the dairy farm operated and what crops the Todds raised to feed their family.

They learned about architecture and clothing of the day. They saw farm implements and other artifacts from colonial times.

The students loved the lesson and learned a lot, according to West Middle history teacher John Graham.

This learning experience sprang to life for West Middle students because of a shared love of local history. It was nurtured to fruition by the collaboration of interested property owners, enthusiastic educators, community residents willing to get involved in student learning and students eager to learn.

Graham knew Lawrence and Sherry Jelsma, the current owners of Stockdale, through membership in the Shelby County Historical Society. Sherry Jelsma invited Graham to bring his history classes to Stockdale, which was the land grant given to Gov. Shelby.

Graham collaborated with



West Middle eighth graders are welcomed to historic Stockdale Farm by student re-enactors from the school's talented and gifted program. They portrayed John Stuart Todd, original owner of the farm, the farm manager and a slave working on the farm. One of six stops students made at the farm, the house is where they learned the farm's history and about Kentucky life in the 1800s.

Kathie Wrightson, the talented and gifted teacher at West Middle. She recruited students from the program to play historical personalities and teach their

study any kind of source document they could find," Wrightson said. "Every detail became important, down to how the hair was worn for the ladies to how much education each of the men might have had. In doing so, my students were able to design personas for their characters and craft monologues for performances at each station."

Graham gave each student who visited the farm a questionnaire that could be completed successfully only by talking to the re-enactors

or adult mentors at each of the six learning stations. Graham created the questionnaire to include items that related not only to history but also science, mathematics and language arts

core content, he said.

"For gifted education, the experience was beneficial because I could see students truly 'living' their learning, using their innate abilities to speak, reason, think, write, reflect and commit to complete a project," said Wrightson.

For more information, contact Graham and Wrightson at (502) 633-4869, jgraham@shelby.k12.ky.us or kwrightson@shelby.k12.ky.us.



A display of old bottles, locks and horseshoes shows students many of the items Lawrence and Sherry Jelsma found while restoring their historic property and home.



Lawrence Jelsma, second from right, discusses medicine and health conditions in 1830 with the eighth graders. Speaking as Ephraim McDowell, a pioneer in surgery, re-enactor Ernie Lefler, right, talked about the successful abdominal operation he performed in Danville in the early 1800s.

eighth-grade peers about colonial life.

These students used old letters, books and other research information about the farm and time period that Sherry Jelsma gathered during restoration of the farm and their home. A former teacher, Jelsma made copies of these resources available to the re-enactors and exchanged information via e-mail with students about the re-enactments.

Jelsma also recruited adults from the local historical society to mentor the student re-enactors. She and Wrightson collaborated on costumes for the role players, Graham said.

"Students had to meticulously



Students take notes as community volunteer Walt Reichert explains how the Todds and other colonial farmers used genetics to develop crops and animal stock for food. Students portraying women of the 1800s talked about gardening and canning.



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